WAR of KINGS

When Earth was invaded by the shape-shifting Skrulls, the Inhumans and their king Black Bolt were grievously injured. The race, which often hid from the outside world, was finally pushed past the breaking point.

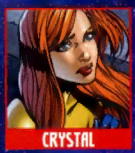
Black Bolt led his people into space, where they swiftly took control of the empire of the ancient Kree, the militarized race that genetically created the Inhumans. The wounded king's goal was for his people to take charge of their destiny and become the peerless weapons of change and advancement that the Kree had always intended them to be.

After exiling the Empress Lilandra, the rival Shi'Ar Imperium expanded under the rule of the despotic mutant Vulcan. Like the Kree, the Shi'Ar is a mature and advanced civilization, but under its ruthless Emperor it has prospered into the largest, most powerful culture in the Galaxy. Lilandra, along with the space pirates called the Starjammers, has since found sanctuary with the Inhumans.

Vulcan saw an opportunity to annex the Kree Empire while it is in a state of upheaval. During the arranged wedding between Crystal of the Inhuman royal family and Ronan of the Kree--a symbolic union of the two kindred races--Vulcan unleashed his Imperial Guard in a callous first strike, and set his war fleets to invade Kree space...

BLACK BOLT

MEDUSA


CRYSTAL

GORGON

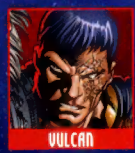
KARNAK

TRITON

MAXIMUS

RONAN

LILANDRA


VULCAN

GLADIATOR

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RADIUS EIGHTEEN MELTS ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WAR BETWEEN THE SHI'AR AND THE KREE.
THIS IS WHAT A NEGA-BOMB DOES.
I WATCH THE WORLD CREMATE VIA INTELFEED ON THE BRIDGE OF MY EMPEROR'S FLAGSHIP.
I AM ABOUT TO DELIVER THE REBEL EMPRESS LILANDRA TO HIM.
THE NEGA-BOMBINGS HAVE PUT HIM IN A GOOD MOOD.
I AM GLADIATOR, PRAETOR OF THE SHI'AR IMPERIAL GUARD, AND I SERVE AT THE PLEASURE OF EMPEROR VULCAN.
EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM
DAN ABNETT & ANDY LANNING writers
PAUL PELLETIER penciler
RICK MAGYAR inker
WIL QUINTANA colorist
VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA letterer
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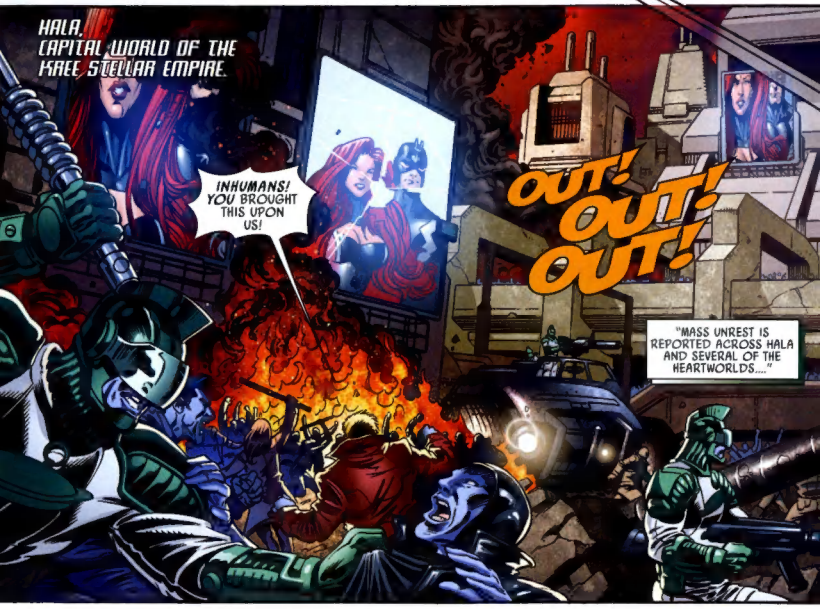
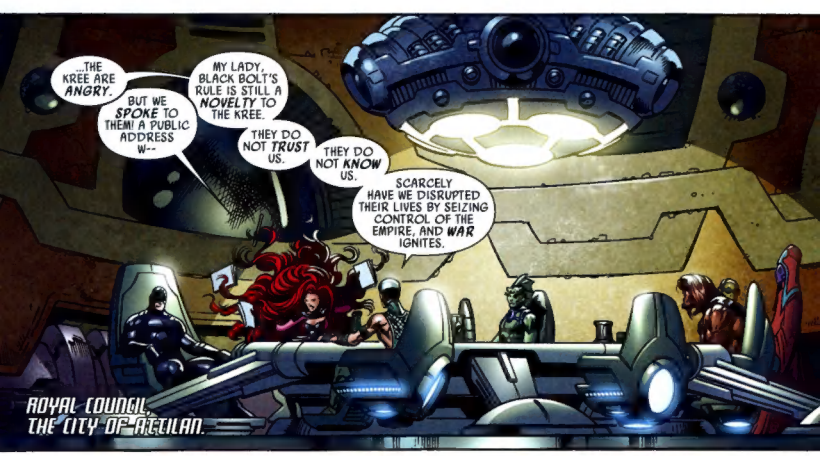
JOE QUESADA editor in chief
DAN BUCKLEY publisher
ALAN FINE exec. producer

CITIZENS OF THE KREE EMPIRE. I AM MEDUSA, AND I SPEAK FOR BLACK BOLT.
MANY OF YOU WILL KNOW THAT WE HAVE SUFFERED AN UNPROVOKED ASSAULT BY THE FORCES OF THE SHI'AR.
THE SHIELD THAT ONCE PROTECTED OUR STAR SYSTEM HAS FALLEN. SHI'AR WARSHIPS HAVE STRUCK AT MANY OUTWORLDS AND FRONTIER COLONIES.
THE ROYAL WEDDING AT THE GON-KET GLACIER WAS INTERRUPTED BY A DESPICABLE ATTACK BY THEIR IMPERIAL GUARD.
AS A CONSEQUENCE, A STATE OF WAR EXISTS BETWEEN OUR EMPIRES.

WE IMPLORE YOU TO REMAIN CALM AND TO ATTEND TO YOUR DUTIES.
THE WANTON AGGRESSION OF VULCAN AND THE SHI'AR WILL NOT GO UNANSWERED.
BLACK BOLT HAS PLEDGED TO LEAD THE KREE TOWARDS THEIR IMPERIAL DESTINY, AND THE INHUMANS WILL NOT WAVER IN THEIR DEFENSE OF--
WHNNCH


HALA, CAPITAL WORLD OF THE KREE STELLAR EMPIRE.
INHUMANS! YOU BROUGHT THIS UPON US!
OUT! OUT! OUT!
"MASS UNREST IS REPORTED ACROSS HALA AND SEVERAL OF THE HEARTWORLDS...."


...THE KREE ARE ANGRY.
BUT WE SPOKE TO THEM! A PUBLIC ADDRESS W--
MY LADY, BLACK BOLT'S RULE IS STILL A NOVELTY TO THE KREE.
THEY DO NOT TRUST US.
THEY DO NOT KNOW US.
SCARCELY HAVE WE DISRUPTED THEIR LIVES BY SEIZING CONTROL OF THE EMPIRE, AND WAR IGNITES.
ROYAL COUNCIL, THE CITY OF ATTILAN.

THEY BLAME US.
TRITON IS RIGHT.
LET'S FIGHT A ******* WAR! THE SOONER THE BETTER! TEACH THESE SHI'AR ***** THE TRUE MEANING OF PAIN!

THAT LEG STILL HURTING YOU, GORGON?
THE HEALER'S FIXED THE BREAK, COUSIN KARNAK, BUT IT'S ITCHY-SORE. MAKES ME IRRITABLE.
A WAR WOULD HELP.

AND SHI'AR BLOOD WILL SPILL! WE WILL TEACH THEM THE PRICE OF CROSSING ATTILAN!
AGREED, BUT WE DO NOT HAVE TIME FOR A WAR. THERE IS TOO MUCH STILL TO ACCOMPLISH.
THE UPLIFT PROGRAM FOR THE KREE ALONE IS SO COMPLEX, WE COULD LOSE YEARS OF LEAD TIME IF WE STOP TO PROSECUTE A LONG-TERM CAMPAIGN.

THEREFORE I PROPOSE WE STRIKE, HARD AND FAST, AND END THIS DISPUTE AS SWIFTLY AND DECISIVELY AS POSSIBLE.
WE MUST BRING THE SHI'AR TO TERMS OR, BETTER STILL, MAUL THEM SO BADLY THEIR MILITARY CAPACITY IS HOBBLED FOR GENERATIONS.
AGREED. NOTHING ELSE IS ACCEPTABLE.
WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ADVANCE ANY OF OUR GRAND DESIGNS UNTIL THE SHI'AR IMPEDIMENT IS REMOVED.
SO YOU'RE PROPOSING A RIGHTEOUS WAR? A WAR TO END WAR?
THIS AMUSES YOU, BROTHER?
IT JUST SOUNDS LIKE THE SORT OF FALLACY A HUMAN WOULD INVENT.
SO HOW DO WE KEEP THE KREE PEOPLE IN LINE?
THEY'VE ENDURED A GREAT DEAL IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. ONE INVASION AFTER ANOTHER. THEY NEED A RALLYING POINT.
UNFORTUNATELY, THE OBVIOUS CANDIDATE FOR THAT ROLE IS NOT IN THE BEST OF HEALTH...

HE SHOULD BE DEAD.
BUT HE CLINGS ON BY SOME FEAT OF STUBBORNNESS. THE HEALERS HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.
POOR RONAN...
QUIK INFIRMARY, HALA.
HE IS MY HUSBAND. IT IS QUITE PREPOSTEROUS TO THINK OF HIM IN THOSE TERMS, BUT TECHNICALLY, HE IS.
THAT'LL TEACH HIM TO MARRY YOU.
LORNA!
SORRY, CRYSTAL.
BUT WHEN THE ENTIRE SHI'AR IMPERIUM INVADES JUST TO STOP HER WEDDING, A GIRL OUGHT TO TAKE IT AS A SIGN.
RONAN IS MY HUSBAND. IT IS A UNION MADE TO CONSECRATE THE FUTURE OF OUR PEOPLES.
I SAY IT WITH NO CONVICTION. MY SISTER-IN-LAW DOES LITTLE TO REASSURE ME, BUT HER TEASING IS JUST AN ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE TENSION.
WHAT IS HAPPENING IS SO BIG. SO MANY PEOPLE DIED YESTERDAY. PLANETS DIED.
LISTEN, CRYSTAL, HAVOK'S GETTING THE STARJAMMER PREPPED FOR LAUNCH.
WE'RE GOING AFTER LILANDRA. WE COULD REALLY USE YOUR TALENTS ON A MISSION LIKE THAT.
I DON'T KNOW. I--

OH.
WHERE IS THE ACCUSER?
LOOK! LOOK, IT'S HER!
STILL IN HER GOWN OF MATRIMONY!
HE'S DEAD, ISN'T HE?
WHEN WILL THE MEDICS COME? I CAN'T STOP MY FATHER'S BLEEDING.
WHY IS THERE NO WATER?
SHE'S ONE OF THEM! AN INHUMAN!
THEY LED US INTO THIS!
WE DID.
RANDAC KNOWS, WE DID.
YOUR ANCESTORS CREATED US TO PROTECT YOU.
IT'S HIGH TIME WE STARTED DOING THAT.
YOUR BABY IS SICK.
VERY SICK, LADY.
I WILL GO AND GET A MEDIC FOR HER.
MY HUSBAND IS VERY SICK TOO BUT RONAN HAS NOT GIVEN UP.
HE BELIEVES IN BLACK BOLT.

CLEAN WATER IS NEEDED IN THIS WARD.
AND OPEN SOME VENTS. I WANT TO BRING FRESH AIR TO THESE PEOPLE.
GET AN INTELFEED CAM ON HER.
QUICKLY.
Y-YES, LADY.
MY HUSBAND'S FAITH IN BLACK BOLT WAS VINDICATED YESTERDAY WHEN THE SHI'AR ATTACKED.
HOW, LADY?
THE SHI'AR CAN SEE WHAT THE INHUMANS AND THE KREE WILL ACHIEVE TOGETHER.
VULCAN IS SO PETRIFIED OF WHAT WE WILL BECOME, HE'S GONE TO WAR TO STOP US.
IMAGINE THAT. EVEN OUR HATED ENEMY BELIEVES WE WILL RISE TO BE UNSTOPPABLE.
NOW, WHERE ARE THE MEDICS?
LADY, CAN YOU HELP MY CHILD?
LADY, BLESS US THIS DAY!
THANK YOU, LADY!

THE CHAMBER OF DEVICES, ATTILAN.
I HEAR SHE EXCELLED HERSELF TODAY.
THE KREE PEOPLE HAVE WARMED TO HER, MAXIMUS. VIRAL FEED FROM THE INFIRMARY HAS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE COMM-NET.
A CANNY MOVE ON HER PART. SHE MADE IT SEEM VERY NATURAL.
THAT'S JUST SIMPLE STATECRAFT. WE WERE ALL TRAINED IN IT.
THEY'RE ALREADY CALLING HER THE PEOPLE'S PRINCESS.
PAH!
HAS THE STARJAMMERS' REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN THEIR MISSION BEEN APPROVED, MY LORD?
WE HAVE AGREED TO IT.

THE COUNTER-OFFENSIVE STARTS TONIGHT. WE WILL BEGIN BY TARGETING THEIR SECOND BATTLEGROUP AT RADIUS EIGHTEEN.
THAT IS, PROVIDED THE NEXT-GENERATION ECHO-WEAPONS ARE READY?
YES, YES! YOU REALIZE I'VE HAD TO SUSPEND WORK ON THE TERRIGEN UPLIFT PROGRAM TO GET THESE DONE?
I'VE ONLY GOT ONE PAIR OF HANDS.
THEY'RE A LITTLE ROUGH AROUND THE EDGES BUT I BELIEVE THEY'LL SERVE.
I THINK THIS BRUTE VULCAN WILL HEAR OUR REPLY LOUD AND CLEAR.
LORD MAXIMUS CALLS THEM CHORUS SENTRIES-- HE HAS INSTALLED ECHO-TECH WEAPON SYSTEMS INTO THEIR COMBAT CHASSIS.

RADIUS SYSTEM, KREE FRONTIER
BLACK BOLT'S BROTHER ENJOYS A POETIC FLOURISH. HE ONCE DEVISED AN INTERROGATION DEVICE THAT CHURNED BRAIN TISSUE INTO MUSH.
HE CALLED IT THE SIEVE OF SECRETS.
THE SHI'AR'S SECOND BATTLE GROUP IS JUST LEAVING ITS ANCHOR STATION ABOVE THE RUINS OF RADIUS EIGHTEEN WHEN OUR COUNTER-STRIKE REACHES THEM.
A HOT WAR EXCHANGE LASTS FOR ABOUT TWO MINUTES.

BY THEN, THE CHORUS SENTRIES, LAUNCHED LIKE MISSILES FROM OUR CARRIER SHIPS, [redacted] DEEP INSIDE THE SHI'AR FORMATION.
KKRNNCH
AND THEY ARE SINGING.
THEIR BATTERIES CHARGED WITH ECHOES OF OUR KING'S VOICE.

NOTHING CAN WITHSTAND THAT
AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME, EIGHT SYSTEMS AWAY THE STARJAMMERS TAUNT DEATH AGAIN.
EHN-FOL SYSTEM, KREE FRONTIER.

TAKING HITS, HAVOK!
HRM. CASCADE SHIELD FAILURE!
DAMN THIS VAT-GROWN GRAFT! I'D BE BETTER OFF WITH A HOOK!
KILL MAIN DRIVE! LORNA? NOW!
AS POLARIS, LORNA DANE IS A MUTANT ADEPT AT MAGNETISM. SHE SUMMONS HER GIFTS...
...AND THE STARJAMMER IS SUDDENLY RUSHING BACKWARDS UNDER THE IONCLAD'S METAL HULL, AND INSIDE THE MINIMUM TRAVERSE OF HER BATTERIES.
WE'VE LOST THEM! THEY'VE GONE UNDER US! THEY'RE STUCK TO OUR HULL LIKE A TICK!
MAGNETICS JUST WENT RIGHT OFF THE SCALE, SIR!
ACTIVATE ANTI-TELEPORT BAFFLES! I WON'T HAVE THEM USING ANY INHUMAN 'PORT TRICKS TO GET ABOARD!

ZERO-G COMBAT IS A SPECIALTY REHEARSED EXHAUSTIVELY BY THE NEW INHUMAN ELITE.
THE DISCIPLINE HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY MASTERED BY THOSE WITH THE ATTRIBUTES TO PRACTICE FOR HOURS IN HIGH-PRESSURE WATER TANKS.
UGH!
AKKK GAH!

IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, OUR TERRIGEN CHAMBERS HAVE PRODUCED AN UNUSUALLY HIGH NUMBER OF AQUATIC TRAITS.
NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY. AS EVER, THE SACRED GEMS WERE ANTICIPATING OUR NEEDS.
INTRUDER! INTRUDER!
GOOD DAY TO YOU, SHI'AR.
MY KING GREETS YOU WITH THESE WORDS.

DORHUN! CHECK THE HELM DESKS FOR AUTO-DESTRUCT SYSTEMS.
ALBAKOR! LOAD UP THE INTRUSION CODE LORD MAXIMUS WROTE FOR US.
HURRY! AS QUICK AS WE PLANNED!
YES, TRITON!
LOADING NOW. WE'RE IN.
ACCESSING SHI'AR NAVAL DATASPHERE...
YOU'VE ONLY GOT NINETY SECONDS BEFORE THEY DETECT YOU AND FREEZE YOU OUT.
I KNOW, I KNOW! GOT IT! IT'S HERE!
HAVOK?
READING YOU, TRITON.
WE'VE JUST PULLED THE INFORMATION OFF THE SHI'AR DATASPHERE...